

REMARKS

INTRODUCTION:

In accordance with the foregoing, the specification has been amended to improve form, and claim 17 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 2, 12, 13, 15, 18, and 21 have been amended, and claim 23 has been added consistent with the interview with the Examiner of May 15, 2003. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry of the foregoing amendments and new claim are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-16 and 18-23 are pending and under consideration.

PATENTABILITY OF NEW CLAIMS:

It is respectfully submitted that claim 23 is deemed patentable for reasons similar to why claims 1, 12, and 21 are deemed patentable and consistent with the reasons set forth in the interview with the Examiner on May 15, 2003.

CONCLUSION:

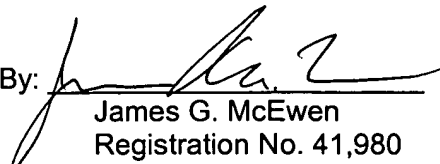
In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot. And further, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding objections or rejections, the application is submitted as being in condition for allowance which action is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner has any remaining issues to be addressed, it is believed that prosecution can be expedited by the Examiner contacting the undersigned attorney for a telephone interview to discuss resolution of such issues.

If there are any additional fees associated with the filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

By: 
James G. McEwen
Registration No. 41,980

700 Eleventh Street, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20001
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501

Date: MAY 27, 2003